



News Release

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

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EAGLE EYES PROGRAM AIMS AT SPOTTING TERRORIST ACTIVITIES

CHARLESTON AIR FORCE BASE, S.C. – Individuals are the only ones who know who or what belongs – or doesn't belong – in their building, neighborhood or work center.

Recognition of this fact is behind one of the latest Air Force antiterrorism initiatives, a program known as "Eagle Eyes."

The program has characteristics of a typical neighborhood-watch program, and Air Force officials consider it a key piece in the service's antiterrorism strategy.

According to Special Agent Kristen Welch, Counterintelligence Program Manager of Det. 310 of the Air Force Office of Special Investigations here, the program takes its cue from the experiences of British and Israeli authorities, who have significant experience dealing with urban terrorism.

"They make it their business to pay a lot of attention to small things that, in combination, can indicate they're being targeted," Welch said. "Eagle Eyes is our model for doing just that. The simple act of recognizing suspicious behavior and reporting it to base authorities could thwart terrorist acts and save lives."

At Charleston AFB, anyone with something to report should immediately call the 437th Security Force Law Enforcement Desk at 911 (on base) or 963-3600. From there, security forces will respond as appropriate to the situation and immediately pass the report to OSI Det. 310. From there, OSI will begin appropriate follow-up action, which may include an agent responding to talk with the person who called in the report to gain additional information on what was seen or heard.

At the same time, the information will be quickly up-channeled to OSI's central analytical center at Andrews AFB, Md., to compare with other Air Force reports, as well as similar information from the Army, Navy and other federal agencies.

But it all begins at the local level, Welch said, where terrorists conduct operational planning activities.

"Every terrorist operation is preceded by precursor events that people need to recognize and report," said Welch. "Terrorist acts don't just happen – they are carefully planned and rehearsed many, many times in advance."

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The key, Welch said, is public awareness of what to look for and take note of – both on and off base.

“This is something the whole community needs to be involved in,” Welch said. “Anyone from active-duty military members, to family members, to government civilians, contractors, and even off-base business proprietors – could see something out of the ordinary, report it, and make the difference between a terrorist act occurring or not occurring. Our best chance to detect and prevent a terrorist act in our community is to vigilantly report it. The more eyes and ears we can enlist to be on the lookout for suspicious activity, the more difficult we can make it for terrorists to act.”

Welch said people shouldn’t be gun-shy about reporting incidents that could turn out to be innocent behavior.

“That’s bound to happen from time to time, but you don’t know if it’s innocent until you report it and have it checked out,” Welch said. “We’re much less concerned about too much reporting than we are with too little. When lives are at stake, it’s better to be safe than sorry. If in doubt, report it. Your call could make the difference. The bottom line is if something bothers you or doesn’t seem right, tell someone.”

Welch said activity that should be reported can be classified into six broad categories:

- Specific threats: any threat received by any means that contains a specific time, location, or area for an attack
- Instances of any out-of-the-ordinary person or persons monitoring activities and/or recording information: activity may include the use of cameras, note taking, notes on maps or drawings, hand-drawn maps or diagrams, and the use of binoculars or other vision-enhancing devices; it could also be as simple as seeing the same unknown vehicle parked in your area without explanation
- Any attempts to obtain security-related information – or even basic information about the base – by anyone who does not have the appropriate security clearance and the need-to-know; known as “elicitation,” these attempts may be made by e-mail, fax, telephone, in person, or through the mail
- Any attempts to measure security-reaction times or strengths and weaknesses; any attempts to test or to penetrate physical security barriers or procedures; any attempts to acquire or duplicate uniforms, badges, passes, or other security-related documents
- Repetitive activities: any two or more suspicious activities by the same person and/or vehicle in a one-month period
- Suspicious activities/incidents: any activity that does not specifically fit into the previous categories yet it is a concern to the individual; some examples of this are thefts of uniforms, ID cards, or vehicle decals from personal vehicles, homes or offices

Military members need to protect each other by being vigilant and aware of their surroundings. The deterrent effect can only work if every individual reports suspicious activities to law enforcement.

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